

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In one embodiment, a first transistor is configured to switch ON to discharge accumulated charges on an interconnect line during a metallization process. This advantageously protects a second transistor, which is coupled to the interconnect line, from charge buildup. The gate of the first transistor may be coupled to the interconnect line by way of a coupling capacitor. The gate of the first transistor may remain floating during the metallization process, and subsequently coupled to ground at a topmost metal level. The metallization process may be physical vapor deposition, for example.

5